



United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

## **Plant Resource Enhancement Activity PLT10 - *Intensive Management of Rotational Grazing Enhancement***



### **Intensive Management of Rotational Grazing**

This enhancement is for the intensive management of livestock grazing to increase production, and improve forage quality and livestock health. The grazing system is managed to produce high quality, nutritious forage and maintain plants with sufficient energy reserves to recover quickly when adequate soil moisture is available for regrowth. Generally, livestock are rotated through pastures in the grazing system based on their daily dry matter intake and nutritional requirements, and the physiological growth and

nutritional stage of the forage plants. This enhancement is for rotational grazing systems that consist of multiple paddocks and frequent rotations.

### **Land Use Applicability**

This enhancement is applicable on pasture and rangeland.

### **Benefits**

The main benefits of Intensive Management of Rotational Grazing are efficient resource use with increased forage utilization, improved manure distribution, and nutrient cycling throughout the grazing acreage, and increased carbon sequestration resulting from greater forage production. Optimal environmental conditions are achieved by maintaining healthy, actively growing forage plants that protect the soil surface from erosion, thereby reducing risks to ground or surface water quality.

### **Criteria for Intensive Management of Rotational Grazing**

A prescribed grazing plan is developed and implemented to address the following requirements.

- Manage vegetation to provide sufficient forage intake for the type and class of livestock, ensuring that sufficient vegetative material remains after a grazing event that the plants can recover and regrow. This is accomplished by dividing pastures into multiple units and using intense grazing periods followed by periods of non-grazing for regrowth of grazed vegetation. The length, intensity and frequency of grazing will vary depending upon livestock species, location and vegetation and will be determined by NRCS at the state level. In addition, the grazing system must also ensure that plants are left in condition to survive the winter or dormant periods of the year. Manage grazing and rest periods to follow NRCS Prescribed Grazing practice standard (528).
- Use a fencing system that is flexible enough to control the amount and location of grazing and confine the livestock.



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- Provide a sufficient quantity of high quality drinking water based on livestock requirements
- Manage livestock access to riparian areas to prevent pollution of surface and ground waters and to ensure the livestock are not exposed to poor quality drinking water, disease-causing insects and bacteria, and/or injury-prone physical conditions.
- Manage soil nutrients to ensure the grazing vegetation has sufficient nutrients for adequate production and plant health. Frequent rotation of pastures will provide better distribution of manure and urine. However, supplemental fertilization may be needed. Apply additional nutrients based on soil test results, realistic forage yield goals and land grant university recommendations.

#### **Documentation Requirements**

- 1) Provide a prescribed grazing plan that addresses the criteria for this enhancement
- 2) Provide a map or aerial photo showing the pastures/paddocks making up the rotational grazing system



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**References:**

***528 – Prescribed Grazing Standard  
Grazing Systems Planning Guide***

Intensively managed rotational grazing systems require more management than typical rotational grazing systems. These systems are used when livestock production is the main goal of the producer, but they can also enhance forage production, plant vigor and utilization of forages by livestock. This enhancement would usually apply to a producer who currently has a rotational grazing system that meets the MN NRCS Prescribed Grazing Practice Standard (528) in place but would like to manage it more intensively.

For the purpose of this enhancement, paddock subdivisions will be created that result in an area sized for the number and weight of animals that will utilize the pasture for a period of **one day, 24 hours, or less**. Paddock sizes will be adjusted to account for standing forage density of desirable forage species, level of supplemental feeding, and the nutritional needs of the livestock on the pasture. Planning procedures listed in the ***Grazing Systems Planning Guide (GSPG)*** that meet ***NRCS Practice Standard 528*** will be used. Typically, larger paddocks may be subdivided with portable fence and watered with portable tanks fed by a pipeline.

Residual stubble heights will be maintained for the key species of forage(s), the species of forage(s) that the planner and the producer identify as those that will be managed. Key species will meet the nutritional needs of the kind and class of livestock to be managed and be adapted to the site. Residual stubble heights for key species may be found in the ***GSPG or in MN Practice Standard 528***. Residual stubble heights are measured in areas that the livestock have grazed and not rejected.

Water will be readily available to livestock and travel distances will be limited to less than 800 feet from any part of the pasture. Water will be delivered in sufficient quantities and rates for the number, weight and class of livestock managed. Refer to ***GSPG*** for the quantity of water to be delivered. Water used by livestock will not contain harmful levels of suspended solids, salts, toxins, and deleterious biological agents.

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